



12 RAJYA SABHA MPs HELD GUILTY OF MISCONDUCT FOR CAUSING DISRUPTIONS
Rajya Sabha Privileges Committee on Thursday held 12 opposition MPs guilty of misconduct for disrupting the House's proceedings last year

RULES BROKEN AMID PROTEST ON MANIPUR ISSUE
The MPs, including Aam Admi Party's Sanjay Singh, were accused of unruly behaviour in Rajya Sabha on August 11, during protests by the Opposition demanding that Prime Minister Narendra Modi speak on the Manipur violence. Singh is accused of rushing into the well of the House and pointing at the Chair seeking discussion on the issue | P9



MPs TOLD TO ADHERE TO CODE OF CONDUCT
■ All of the lawmakers have since apologised. The panel, in its report, told them to "scrupulously adhere to exemplary conduct"
■ Among the 12 MPs held guilty are Shaktisinh Gohil, Sushil Gupta, Sandeep Pathak, Naranbhai J Rathwa, L Hanumanthaiah, Syed Nasir Hussain, Kumar Ketkar, Phulo Devi Netam, and Jebi Mather Hisham

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LAWMAKERS SUSPENDED IN BOTH HOUSES DURING LAST YEAR'S WINTER SESSION

Emergency a punching bag for Prez as well

No word on the ambitious One Nation, One Poll, Uniform Civil Code

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR
@ New Delhi

A day after Speaker Om Birla deplored Emergency, President Droupadi Murmu followed suit on Thursday, describing it as the biggest and darkest chapter of a direct attack on the Constitution, in her first address to a joint session of Parliament after the constitution of the 18th Lok Sabha.

Murmu also expressed grave concern over frequent disruptions in Parliament because of differences between the treasury and the Opposition benches. She hailed the record turnout of voters in J&K in the general elections, saying the Kashmir valley has given a befitting reply to the enemies of India who spread false propaganda at global forums.

The President also touched upon various policy initiatives like the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) but was silent on the BJP's promise of a Uniform Civil Code and the One Nation, One Poll proposal.

Murmu said, "The Constitution of India has stood up to every challenge and every test in the past decades. Even when the Constitution was in the making, there were forces in the world who wished India to fail". After the Constitution came into force, it was attacked many times. "The imposition of Emergency on June 25 in



President Droupadi Murmu addresses the joint sitting of Parliament | P11

SENGOL ROW AFTER SP MEMBER'S SUGGESTION

Samajwadi Party MP RK Chaudhary's demand to replace the Sengol installed next to the Speaker's chair with a copy of the Constitution triggered a war of words on Thursday. While Opposition leaders supported him, the ruling BJP lit into Chaudhary for disrespecting Indian and Tamil culture. Chaudhary had written to Speaker Om Birla demanding that the Sengol, a symbol of transfer of power when India got independence, be removed as it represents monarchy | P9



1975 was the biggest and darkest chapter of direct attack on the Constitution," she said. It drew wide criticism on the Opposition benches.

As for the ruling NDA, Murmu said the government is taking all efforts to make the Constitution embedded in public's consciousness. She pointed out that even in J&K, the Constitution is now fully in force.

Giving the Opposition a bit of advice, President Murmu said, "Opposition of policies and obstruction of parliamentary functioning are two different things. All of us are responsible for ensuring that no

obstacle comes in the way of achieving the resolution of Viksit Bharat."

Amid the row over alleged malpractices in the holding of NEET-UG and the cancellation and deferment of a few other competitive exams, Murmu said, "My government is committed to a fair investigation and ensuring strict punishment to the culprits. Even earlier, we have witnessed many instances of paper leaks in different states."

Speaking about the government, she said the people have given the NDA a clear and stable mandate for a third time.

Make DKS CM, Vokkaliga seer tells Siddhu

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

EVEN as the debate on inducting more DyCMs into the Siddaramaiah cabinet is raging, senior seer of Vishwa Vokkaliga Mahasamsthana Mutt Chandrashekara Swamiji on Thursday demanded that DyCM DK Shivakumar be made Chief Minister.

Interestingly, the seer made this statement in the presence of CM Siddaramaiah and his cabinet ministers, Nirmalananda Swamiji of Balagangadharanatha Mutt and Nanjavadoota Swamiji at a function here to mark Kempegowda Jayanthi.



Senior seer of Vishwa Vokkaliga Mahasamsthana Mutt Chandrashekara Swamiji (second from left) offers floral tributes to the statue of Kempegowda in Bengaluru on Thursday | ALLEN EGBURSE |

He said many leaders enjoyed power as CM except Shivakumar. Siddaramaiah has already served and is serving as CM. He should pave the way for Shivakumar to become CM. "This will

happen only if Siddaramaiah makes up his mind to make Shivakumar CM. I request Siddaramaiah with folded hands to make Shivakumar CM," he said.

Later, the seer said, "It is dhar-

ma to make Shivakumar CM." Asked if Shivakumar spoke to him in this regard earlier, the seer said he (Shivakumar) should have been CM by now. But he (Siddaramaiah) is not willing. Someone has to convince Siddaramaiah to do so," he said.

The seer indirectly slammed other senior swamis of various Vokkaliga mutts when asked if they supported his statement on making Shivakumar CM. He said, "Our society is like this. They won't make such statements in the presence of the CM or ministers for the fear of losing certain privileges or benefits from the government."

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Opposition to press for debate on NEET in Parliament today

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

AMID the nationwide outrage over allegations of paper leaks and irregularities involving the National Testing Agency (NTA), the opposition parties said they will demand a discussion on the matter and bring adjournment motions in both Houses of Parliament on Friday. The decision was taken at the meeting of the floor leaders of the INDIA bloc at the residence of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge.

An Opposition leader who attended the meeting told this newspaper that all the parties unanimously decided



Two men arrested by CBI being taken for medical checkup in Patna | P11

to move adjournment motions on the NEET row in both Houses of Parliament. The parties will demand a debate on NEET in both Houses before the discussion on the Motion of Thanks on the President's address takes place, said a senior leader. This is to ensure that NEET

gets adequate time for discussion, he added.

While Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi will raise the issue in the Lok Sabha, Kharge will lead take it up in the Upper House. Sources said the Opposition parties will not relent until discussion happens.

Meanwhile, the CBI on Thursday made its first arrests in the NEET-UG paper leak case, taking two persons—Manish Kumar and Ashutosh Kumar—into custody in Patna for allegedly providing safe accommodation to aspirants and giving them leaked question papers and answer keys.

ANNUAL REPORT

Alarming rise in hate speech in India: Blinken

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

THERE has been a 'concerning increase' in anti-conversion laws, hate speech, and demolition of homes and places of worship of minority communities in India, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said.

Releasing the annual State Department report on international religious freedom in Washington on Wednesday (local time), Blinken said not just India but governments around the world are increasingly targeting individuals, shuttering places of worship, forcibly displacing communities, and imprisoning people based on their religious beliefs. He also noted that attacks against Jews and Muslims have increased in the US after the Gaza war started.

The 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom says 10 out of India's 28 states have laws restricting religious conversions for all faiths. Some of these states also impose penalties for religious conversions done for the purpose of marriage, it adds.

The report says that in 2023, Christians and Muslims were arrested in India under laws banning forced religious conversions, adding that in some cases, these laws were abused to harass religious minorities. US ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom Rashad Hussain said: "In India, Christian communities reported that local police aided mobs that disrupted worship services over accusations of conversion activities, or stood by while mobs attacked them and then arrested the victims on conversion charges."

The report notes the Indian government's plan to enact a Uniform Civil Code has been opposed by Muslim, Sikh, Christian, and tribal leaders as well as some state governments on fears that it will turn the country into a Hindu Rashtra.

TWIN-CITY CONNECTIVITY

Stalin announces plan to build int'l airport at Hosur

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Chennai

THE Tamil Nadu government will set up an international airport on 2,000 acres of land in Hosur with a capacity to handle 30 million passengers a year to cater to the increasing industrial needs of Krishnagiri and Dharmapuri districts, Chief Minister M K Stalin told the Assembly on Thursday. Making the announcement under Rule 110 of the Assembly, the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister underscored the need to enhance connectivity to Hosur and support numerous manufacturing and industrial units in and around the city that are attracting investments in electronics and electric vehicles manufacturing.

He said the state government has been carrying out several farsighted measures to bring in modern infrastructure in Ho-

sur. The new master plan for Hosur is about to be completed soon, he said.

Stalin said that the state government felt an airport was needed in Hosur to help the socio-economic development of Krishnagiri and Dharmapuri region.

"The new airport will foster a twin-city ecosystem with Bengaluru propelling growth in both Tamil Nadu and Karnataka," Industries Minister TRB Rajaa later said in a statement while extending his heartfelt thanks to the Chief Minister for the announcement.

"This project will greatly enhance connectivity and stimulate economic growth, benefiting not only Hosur but also neighbouring districts such as Dharmapuri and Salem, while also providing a significant boost to various parts of Bengaluru," Rajaa said.



Need more airports, TN move welcome: Expert

AKNISREE KARTHIK @ Bengaluru

ALTHOUGH the TN government's move to build an international airport at Hosur near Bengaluru violates the agreement signed by Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL), the operator of Kempegowda International Airport (KIA), with the Union Ministry of Civil Aviation, former bureaucrat K Jairaj, who was instrumental in establishing KIA, said there is a need to review the agreement as air traffic has increased beyond expectations.

"Commercial operations at KIA commenced in 2008. As per the agreement between BIAL and the Union Ministry of Civil Aviation, no new airport should be set up within an aerial distance of 150 km of KIA. This agreement holds good till 2033," Jairaj told *TNIE*.

"Air traffic is witnessing a big growth year after year. We expected it to grow by around 7%. But its growth has almost touched 15%. Given this significant growth and demand for air travel, the 25-year agreement should be reviewed," he said. The TN government has announced that it will build the international airport at Hosur, which is around 74 km from KIA. Going by the agreement, BIAL should give the Hosur airport operator a NOC.

Bengaluru is a key Global Capacity Centre (GCC) hub with over 250 GCCs. The city has grown by leaps and bounds. So, BIAL's business will never be threatened by TN's international airport at Hosur, though it will come up within the 150-km vicinity of KIA, Jairaj said. With an aim to become a developed nation by 2047 and the third largest economy, India needs more airports and the one proposed at Hosur should be permitted, he said.



INDIA MARCH INTO FINAL

Skipper makes 57 as India beat England, to face South Africa in summit clash

ROHIT, SKY SET TONE
Through this WC, Rohit Sharma has walked the talk. Intent up front. And when it comes off, it has a significant impact as it did on Thursday. The skipper, who hit 57 off 39, added 73 runs with Suryakumar as India posted an above par total

SPINNING IT INDIA'S WAY
On this low, slow surface, it was expected that the spinners would do some damage. Axar Patel, with some help from Jasprit Bumrah, ran through the top-order. With figures of 3/14 in his first three overs, he broke the spine of the chase. At the end of 10 overs, England were 62/5, and from thereon, it all went downhill. Jos Buttler-led side were eventually all out for 103, falling short by 68 runs.

PROTEAS MAKE HISTORY
On a surface that had variable bounce, South Africa pacers Marco Jansen (3/16), Kagiso Rabada (2/14) and Anrich Nortje (2/7) attacked the stumps consistently to dismiss Afghanistan for just 56 runs. South African batters ensured a nine-wicket win to enter their first men's WC final

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Policy switch to make full fighter jets in India

SHAHID FARIDI @ New Delhi

NOT content with piecemeal Make in India initiatives in its defence procurement, the Union government has made a policy switch to buy as many as 114 Multi-Role Fighter Aircraft (MRFA) only from a vendor who is ready to set up a manufacturing unit in India for the entire aircraft.

It also wants transfer of technology and full production in India in a joint venture with a local partner. A new global tender incorporating these conditions is likely to be floated soon.

The radical shift in policy is expected to delay the MRFA ac-

quisition further. India has 31 squadrons of fighter jets as against the sanctioned strength of 42. A large number of parts of fighter aircraft purchased earlier are already being manufactured in India under the off-set obligations. This is the first time that the government will be insisting on manufacturing complete aircraft in India with technology transfer.

Approximately valued at \$20 billion, the MRCA is said to be one of the world's biggest defence deals in recent times. Among the aircraft in the race to bag the contract are Dassault's Rafale, Boeing's Su-

per Hornet F/A-18, SAAB's Gripen, Lockheed Martin's F-21, Russian MiG-35 and the Eurofighter Typhoon.

Sources said French company Dassault, makers of Rafale, which has been the frontrunner to bag the contract, is not keen to transfer technology for production in India. The Indian government has already bought 36 Rafale jets for the Indian Air Force and is likely to go ahead with its decision to purchase 26 Rafale Marine to replace the ageing MiG-29s being used on INS Vikramt and INS Vikramaditya.

The Union government has

been encouraged by its success in getting US company GE Aerospace Defence and Systems to produce fighter jet engines in India in collaboration with the state-owned Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd.

As per the deal signed during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's last visit to the US, GE will transfer 80% technology of its F414 jet engines that will power the Mk2 version of India's indigenous Light Combat Aircraft.

The government has increased the FDI sectoral limit in defence to 74% to make the country a defence manufacturing hub.

114 MRFA DEAL

750-page chargesheet filed against BSY in POCSO case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE Criminal Investigation Department (CID) on Thursday filed a chargesheet against former chief minister and senior BJP leader BS Yediyurappa in a case registered against him under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

The chargesheet was filed at Fast Track Court 1 for POCSO Act, 2012 Cases in Bengaluru. In the 750-page chargesheet, 74 people have been listed as witnesses

against Yediyurappa and his aides YM Arun, M Rudresh and G Mariswamy. The three aides have been named as accused in the chargesheet for allegedly destroying evidence and trying to shield the senior BJP leader.

Yediyurappa has been charged with sexual harassment (IPC 354A), destruction of document or electronic record to prevent its production as evidence (IPC 204), offering gift or restoration of property in consideration of screening offender (IPC 214), and Section 8 of the POCSO Act.

EXPRESS READ

Two auto drivers electrocuted in M'luru

MANGALURU: Two autorickshaw drivers died after they came in contact with a live wire that snapped, following heavy rain in Mangaluru on Wednesday night. The deceased have been identified as Raju (50) and Devaraj (46). Raju was washing his auto when a live wire fell on him. Devaraj, who rushed to save Raju, also suffered severe burns. Both died on the spot.

WITH THIS ISSUE

BEST WEEKEND GUIDE
INDULGE
42 PAGES, INCLUDING 24 OF INDULGE (TABLOID)